



## Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.

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### **“As Long as the Turbines Turn”: MKO reacts to Premier Kinew’s lifting of the former PC Government’s gag order on Manitoba Hydro**

**Treaty One Territory, Winnipeg, MB** – Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) Inc. is issuing this statement in response to the news stories from various media outlets reporting Premier Kinew has rescinded the previous PC government’s order that prevented Manitoba Hydro from engaging in talks with First Nations, Metis and Inuit governments.

***“I commend Premier Kinew’s bold leadership in rescinding the order of the previous PC government directing Manitoba Hydro not to engage with First Nations, Metis and Inuit governments.”***

***MKO Grand Chief Garrison Settee***

Grand Chief Garrison Settee states: “Since the formation and incorporation of MKO in 1981, hydroelectric development in the North had been existence for decades and advocating for addressing hydro development impacts on MKO First Nations have been key components of its advocacy since that time. Due to the fact that several hydroelectric generating stations are located in the MKO territory, I assert that the relationship of MKO and its First Nations with Manitoba Hydro, the Government of Manitoba and the people of Manitoba are longstanding and will continue long into the future for “as long as the turbines turn.” The fact that the water of the North is the driving force of the majority of hydroelectricity in the province of Manitoba, there needs to be recognition and acknowledgement that the water within the MKO territory is a “shared resource.” Not only is the water used for hydroelectricity, but we, the people of MKO, have relied upon that same water for our existence and the sustenance of our cultures, heritage and identities.

Of note, in the recent development of Manitoba Hydro’s Integrated Resource Plan, MKO submitted the following overall recommendations:

“MKO strongly recommends that the following be acknowledged, highlighted and addressed throughout the Manitoba Hydro Integrated Plan and Planning Process:

1. Manitoba Hydro’s acknowledgment of the existing and continuing presence of Indigenous Peoples in Manitoba, that is, for Manitoba Hydro to present the “Land Acknowledgment” in a present tense;
2. To acknowledge the central and principal relationship between Manitoba Hydro and First Nations on the developed waterways;
3. To acknowledge and include “Reconciliation” as a key driver of change; and
4. To acknowledge, include and address “Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples” as one of the “Key inputs and factors creating uncertainty in pace of change”

Grand Chief Settee continued: “In the context of MKO’s experience and continued relationship with Manitoba, Manitoba Hydro and the people of Manitoba, I commend Premier Kinew’s bold leadership

in rescinding the order of the previous PC government. Personally, I am from the hydroelectric impacted Cree Nation of Pimicikamak at Cross Lake and I have seen firsthand the human impacts and environmental devastation of hydroelectric development. Manitoba Hydro has, not only an environmental legacy in the North, but also cultural, social, economic and spiritual impact legacies upon the people of northern Manitoba. However, as we consider our present evolution as First Nations societies in the context of the colonial nation of Canada, we look with hope to the future that reconciliation and decolonization will begin to unfold in earnest with bold actions and declarations as demonstrated by Premier Kinew.”

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*Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) is a non-profit, political advocacy organization that has represented 26 First Nation communities in Manitoba's North since 1981. The MKO represents more than 72,000 First Nations people.*